Volume 7, Edition 2

Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club WIRELESS

February 2003

NEXT LICENSE CLASS STARTING THIS MONTH

I BET THERE'S A SPOUSE OR TWO OUT THERE EAGER TO GET A LICENSE

FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL

Thanks to George, K6ITE, for taking charge of the January meeting. This month's meeting will feature Herb Sullivan, K6QXB. I have known Herb for many years and he is quite knowledgeable in the areas of microwave and satellite communications. His station at Santa Rosa Junior College regularly handles the amateur communications between the International Space Station and schools all around the country. Make sure you attend the February meeting.

We have had a lot of losses in these past days. First it was the men and women on the Columbia space shuttle and then Jim Maxwell, W6CF, director of the ARRL Pacific Division.

Some good news. VOMARC will start a ham class at the new fire station on the 25th of this month. Darrel is making the arrangements to round up the instructors and procure the materials from the ARRL. Steve,KD6KVY, has arranged for the use of the classroom in the new fire station. All of you can help by passing the word about the class. WE NEED STUDENTS because new students usually means new members for our club.

I could use some help making presentations at the Boy's and Girl's club and the Prestwood after school program. I will have flyers available, but I can't

be everywhere. Please help by assisting in the advertising. Call me if you can help.

Congratulations to Joan, W6WXU, and her granddaughter, Mattie, for such a marvelous accomplishment. (Mattie just upgraded to General.)

A group of local hams led by Steve, K2IYQ, will be working on providing the sun and earth sensors for a new amateur satellite called Eagle. Those involved from VOMARC are Ken, N6KM, Joan, W6WXU, Mike, WB6TMH and yours truly. It should be an exciting project. Steve and I worked on a similar project for AO-40 and had a lot of fun doing it. Steve and our guest speaker for this month will probably have more to say on the project.

Attention VE's. VOMARC will hold the quarterly VE session on the 22nd of this month. Contact Randy or Colleen if you can help out.

If you are not a member of the ARRL, please consider joining. This organization is our only voice to the government and there is a lot of matters that need constant attention. Corporate takeover of our frequencies is probably the biggest issue but there are many others. Besides receiving QST every month, you get special privileges on the ARRL web site. Give it a thought. Hope to see you all at the next meeting. Remember to turn the radio on and talk to someone.

73, Jim

GREETINGS VOMARCIANS!

The meeting on the 15th went well, at least from my point of view. We had 18 people, give or take a Ham or two, including one guest, David Wiley KD6KWM, and our guest speaker, George Rothbart, KF6VSG from San Rafael. George had some trouble finding his way to the meeting, but had some excellent assistance from Tim KG6ASY and Mike WB6TMH. George gave an excellent talk on the development and implementation of his automatic audio control device for PSK31. He used a very nicely done PowerPoint presentation and a demonstration of the circuit. Ken N6KM, added his knowledgeable thoughts on PSK31 and the other digital modes, encouraging others to give them a try. I've sent a thank you email to George and he responded favorably, willing to do another presentation in the future.

Joan recorded the meeting. We did read the treasurer's report, but did not have the previous month's minutes to approve, or not, and that was deferred to the next meeting. Ken N6KM spoke about ACS issues, promising drills and training in the coming months. Darrel WD6BOR spoke about the Hamfest, encouraging everyone

to work on making those contacts with other organizations to participate in the event. I didn't think of bringing ice, so we didn't have the usual refreshment.

I have the big plastic jar, with several membership renewal fees therein. I'll get that to Steve in the next day or two.

George K6ITE

ON CALL
February 2003

Ken McTaggart N6KM
S. V. ACS Unit Leader

We are fortunate to have five members who have received the necessary training from DES to be qualified to hook up and haul Unit 2929 (the Sonoma County communications trailer). Their new ID cards sport a special symbol to identify them as having this training. They are: Jim - K6UUW; Dan - KF6LJN; Jan -AE6FQ; Dick - KF6FZM; and George - K6ITE. Congratulations, this makes us the unit with the most qualified drivers for 2929.

I am NCS this month for our net. Jan, AE6FQ, is NCS for March. However, we still need volunteers for the months of August, September, and October. Please contact me to volunteer your services as NCS.

Thanks to the help of Jan, AE6FQ, I hope to improve the ACS page on VOMARC.ORG. We will have the net script for our net available as well as the NCS list for the year. We will also have an event calendar so you can check on drills, training, public service events and other items of interest for our unit.
... -.-

AMATEUR RADIO HELPING OUT

According to the national membership association for amateur radio, the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), ham radio volunteers are currently assisting federal, state and local officials and relief organizations in Texas in their search for shuttle Columbia debris and the remains of the crew members.

Amateur radio operators must pass rigorous tests to receive a license and a call sign from the Federal Communications Commission - clearing them to broadcast radio, TV or data signals on frequencies set aside for their use. ARRL officials say local efforts following the Columbia disaster have been a great success.

"Ham radio has proven to be the only reliable communications options during the recovery effort," according to Tim Lewallen (call sign KD5ING) of the Nacogdoches, Texas, Amateur Radio Club. "The communications systems used by other federal and state organizations cannot penetrate 'The Pine Curtain' as we know it in East Texas," he said. "The

dense forests and hilly terrain just swallow up most radio traffic, and even county sheriff and county fire department radio systems have serious blind spots." According to Lewallen, federal authorities have requested that every survey team have at least one amateur radio operator along to help keep the recovery efforts coordinated and organized.

In South Texas, there are requests for hams that are still needed to assist in the search effort - with an urgent need for operators in the San Augustine County, where substantial debris remains to be recovered. Local coordinators say two-to-four dozen operators are needed each day and they expect the need to continue for the next three weeks.

Hams are using local amateur radio clubs' repeaters - which are receiver-transmitter combinations, usually installed on top of tall buildings that take low power radio signals and re-broadcast them at elevated power to a large area. Dallas County volunteers are being told they should use high-powered radios in the recovery effort because handheld "walkie-talkies" don't have the necessary range. It's also recommended they bring four-wheel drive vehicles, portable GPS (global positioning systems) and even laptop computers with mapping programs if they're not familiar with the area.

Area residents with VHF scanners can listen in on the recovery effort. In the Dallas area, activities can be monitored on 146.96 MHz; in Nagodoches on 147.32 MHz, in St. Augustine on 146.74 MHz, and on a portable repeater in East Texas on 146.66 MHz. Yesterday, a Dallas resident who's been listening told MSNBC.com there were several reports of "hazardous materials" being found and that "demolition experts" were called in to assist in the recovery.

Three of the Columbia astronauts were licensed amateur radio operators: Mission Specialists Kalpana Chawla,KD5ESI; David Brown, KC5ZTC; Laurel Clark KC5ZSU. They aren't alone - many people associated with the space program have been active in amateur radio, including businessmen Dennis Tito,KG6FZX, and the three astronauts still circling the earth in the International Space Station - Commander Ken Bowersox, KD5JBP, Don Pettit, KD5MDT and Nikolai Budarin, RV3FB. Even astronaut hopeful Lance Bass of 'N Sync is a ham - KG4UYY.

The three current space station astronauts are manning NA1SS, the first permanent amateur radio station in space. Use of NA1SS has been temporarily curtailed. Last week, the astronauts were scheduled to make radio contact with high school students in Germany. The session was postponed. But,

according to the ISS governing group, space station contacts are expected to resume later this month.

Gary Krakow, W2GSK.

SIX-YEAR-OLD OREGON GIRL GETS GENERAL TICKET

A six-year-old girl from Roseburg, Oregon, has upgraded from Technician to General. Mattie Clauson, KD7TYN--a fourth-generation Amateur Radio operator in her family--could be the youngest General-class operator in the US. Her new ticket was granted January 13.

Mattie allowed that the Element 3 test "was pretty hard" and she had to study for a long time before passing it on her third attempt. "The Element 3 test was a lot harder than the Tech test," she said. She was ambivalent about the 5 WPM Element 1 Morse code exam, characterizing it as "not too hard, just a little, but kind of easy too."

Her parents, Tim and Charlotte Clauson, AC7SP and KD7QZB, say Mattie became interested in Amateur Radio when she was five. The Clausons discovered "a kid-friendly study book," Ride the Airwaves with Alpha and Zulu by John Abbott, K6YPB (no longer in print--Ed). The Clausons say Mattie, who already knew how to read, dove into it right away. Her mom and dad helped her to study, explained the "hard questions" and encouraged her to take practice tests at various Web sites. She obtained her Technician license last July and became KD7SDF.

The Clausons said Mattie learned Morse code using several different computer programs, and they helped her practice by tapping out letters--and later words--for her. In the end, she passed her code exam on the very first try. For the time being, Mattie says, she's sticking with phone operation but plans to give CW a try in the future. Mattie says she prefers HF over VHF "because I can talk to people in other countries."

Home schooled with her sisters, Mattie loves to read, and that may contribute to her precocity. Among her favorites books are those by Cynthia Wall, KA7ITT, Encyclopedia Brown, and Nancy Drew. Her parents say ham radio has been a very useful tool in home schooling--in terms of letter recognition, spelling, science, geography and other subjects.

The Clausons say Mattie doesn't consider herself "someone special" since passing her General test, and neither do they. "We do not feel that Mattie has any abilities above any other child," Charlotte Clauson said.

For her part, Mattie says she hopes that she can be an inspiration to other youngsters her age to get involved with Amateur Radio. "I think that

since I got my license, whether Tech or higher, other kids can do it also," she said. Mattie's late great grandfather, S.A. "Sam" Sullivan, was W6WXU; his daughter, Joan Brady--Mattie's grandmother--now holds hisformer call sign.

"The ham community has also been very supportive, especially in the Roseburg area," said Charlotte Clauson. "Their enthusiasm has made Mattie's experience with ham radio very positive." A article on Mattie Clauson appeared February 3 in the Statesman Journal of Salem, Oregon <http://news.statesmanjournal.com/article.cfm?i=56021>.

Tim, Charlotte and Mattie Clauson all are ARRL members. Mattie and her mom now are working on their Amateur Extra tickets.

ARRL PACIFIC DIVISION DIRECTOR JIM MAXWELL, W6CF, SK

ARRL Pacific Division Director Jim Maxwell, W6CF, died February 6 at his home in Redwood Estates, California. He was 69 years old.

Maxwell joined the ARRL Board of Directors in 1994 after being elected Pacific Division Vice Director; he became Director in January 2000. Pacific Division Vice Director Bob Vallio, W6RGG, takes over immediately as Director; ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, will appoint a new Vice Director. Maxwell, a Life Member of the League, also previously served as Section Manager for the Santa Clara Valley section.

"Jim Maxwell was a gentle giant of a man," Haynie said. "He was one of the best assets Amateur Radio could have in a leadership position."

ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, said, "Jim Maxwell was one of the most brilliant people I have ever had the privilege to know. He was also one of the most unselfish and one of the most modest. Putting them all together, he was truly in a class by himself. To say he will be missed is a gross understatement."

Maxwell was an avid DXer--belonging to many DX and contest clubs and organizations, including the Northern California Contest Club--and he was also an accredited ARRL Volunteer Examiner. Maxwell served as an ARRL Emergency Coordinator from 1991 to 1999 and he was on the DX Advisory Committee from April 1988 through 1993. Maxwell previously held the call W6CUF.

His interest in radio and electronics history was well known, with Maxwell and his wife Trudy, KC6NAX, both helping to spearhead archiving efforts at ARRL Headquarters.

Professionally, Maxwell held doctoral degrees in aeronautical engineering and biomechanics. He retired from Lockheed as a

Technical Consultant in 1992 and from Scitor Corp. in 1998.

VOMARC MINUTES JANUARY 15, 2002

18 in attendance

Meeting called to order at 7:40PM.

No minutes were read as the December meeting was the annual dinner and installation of officers.

Treasurers report: $1391.87 in the bank.

New Business:

Time to organize the Ham Fest. April will be here soon. Darrell still needs to have people contact other non-profit clubs and invite them to share the day. Some suggestions: The Town Band. Pets Lifeline, Friends of the Library, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys & Girls Club. Any other suggestions are welcome. Please contact Darrell, WB6BOR. Joan, W6WXU, offered to make the calls, but people need to give her the information on which clubs and the contact person.

ACS report: Suggestions for improving the programs and training are always welcome. This is your organization, and the hope is that you will stay interested and committed. Net controls are needed for the summer. Dan, KG6LJN, is doing net control for January. If you wish to be net control for a month, please let Ken, N6KM; Steve, K2IYQ; or Jim, K6UUW know. The goal is to have enough people be net control that no one person needs to handle the net twice in a year. The ACS roster, the SOP and call out tree and frequencies will be posted on the VOMARC website. Phone numbers will not be posted.

The VOMARC roster will be published in the next newsletter. (The roster will be published as soon as the membership has renewed for the year and the roster is updated. Ed.)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15PM and the program commenced.

The speaker for the evening was Dr. George Rothbart, KF6VSG. The presentation was on PSK31and an automatic volume adjusting feature that he has developed. Anyone who missed the program can go to the website www,ssiserver.com/info/pskmeter to see a presentation. Recommended reading is Wireless Digital Communications Design and Theory by Tom McDermott, N5EG. Also, the website www.psk31.com or the ARRL.org website have information.

Dr. Rothbart has been approached to kit the device he has developed. After viewing the presentation, anyone

interested may contact him at www.george@softsci.com,

Kermit, W6JFN, won the monthly drawing.

Submitted by Joan, W6WXU

FIELD DAY GETS A NEW ENTRY CLASS FOR 2003

Field Day will gain another entry class for the 2003 running of this highly popular operating event June 28-29. "Class F" stations will operate at emergency operations centers--or EOCs. The change renews the emphasis of Field Day's 1933 origins as an emergency preparedness exercise as opposed to a routine contest--what former ARRL Communications Manager F. E. Handy, W1BDI, called "a test of the emergency availability of portable stations and equipment." In Handy's view, Field Day would focus attention "on the subject of 'preparedness' for communications emergencies."

ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, says the League last year received a record 2110 Field Day entries from groups and individuals. That represented a total of almost 35,000 participants who joined in what Henderson called "a great tradition."

Given the increased emphasis on emergency communications since September 11, 2001, Henderson says, the ARRL Board's Membership Services Committee asked that the Contest Branch come up with a way to accommodate stations wanting to operate from the local EOC. The new Class F station, operating from an EOC, is the result.

"This is a major change," Henderson said. "Class F has been established to encourage groups to test and further their working relationships with established emergency operations centers." The updated rules and a list of frequently asked questions in the new 2003 Field Day Packet (http://www.arrl.org/contests/forms) spell out the details.

A Class F entry station must set up at an "established EOC" activated by a club or non-club group. An EOC is defined as a facility established by a federal, state, county, city or other civil governmental agency or administrative entity or by a chapter of a national or international served agency. The latter could include the American Red Cross or The Salvation Army, with which the Field Day group "has an established operating arrangement." Class F EOC operation must take place in cooperation with the EOC staff. Class F stations are eligible for the same bonus points as Class A stations.

There's also been what Henderson called "some tweaking" in the rules for Field Day 2003. Among the highlights, the rules reduce from

400 to 100 the number of QSOs that the "Get On The Air" (GOTA) station needs to make to claim a 100-point bonus. "GOTA stations still may work up to a maximum of 400 QSOs to go towards the main station's score," Henderson said.

In addition, the 2003 rules enhance the bonus for having an invited official visit the Field Day site. There are now two separate bonus categories--100 points for the elected official and another 100 points for a visit by a representative of a served agency.

Henderson reminds Field Day participants that stations do not get additional bonus points for contacting stations through additional satellites. As of the 2002 event, Field Day opened up to stations throughout the Americas, not just in the US and Canada.

Henderson encourages participants to post their Field Day experiences and photographs to the Field Day Online soapbox http://www.arrl.org/contests/soapbox/.

SEND YOUR DUES IF YOU HAVEN'T

It seems that the new year appears sooner rather than later every year. Besides buying a new calendar and throwing out the old one, we have to keep track of all the clubs we belong to and renew our memberships. If you haven't sent your VOMARC dues in yet, please take a minute to do so. At the end of this newsletter is the form to send in or bring it to the meeting with your check or cash. Full membership is the whooping amount of $10 for the year and family members are only $ 5 for the year. Make your check to VOMARC, please. 73, Steve, K2IYQ

THE VOMARC WIRELESS

VOLUME 7 EDITION 1

A publication of the Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club – W6AJF

Frank C. Jones – W6AJF
Honorary President in Perpetuity

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Jim Hill, K6UUW – President
George Maurer, K6ITE– Vice President
Joan Brady, W6WXU – Secretary
Steve Todd, K2IYQ – Treasurer
Mike Miller, WB6TMH – Radio Officer
Ken McTaggert, N6KM – Club Trustee
Steve Todd, K2IYQ – Membership Chair
Darrel Jones, WD6BOR - Editor

Receipt of the Wireless is one of the most sought after benefits of membership in VOMARC.

CLUB MEETINGS are held on the third Wednesday of each month in McDougal Hall at the Sonoma Developmental Center, 15000 Arnold Drive, Eldridge. Meetings start at 19:30 local (7:30 P.M.).

Nets are held every Wednesday night at 19:30 (7:30 P.M.) local, except meeting nights on the 145.350 repeater, -600, PL 88.5 Hz.

ACS holds a net each Monday evening at 19:30 local on the 146.205, +600, PL 88.5 Hz repeater.

PACKET STATION INFO: The VOMARC packet station is on 144.910 as “SNV1EC”. “SNVGW” can be used as a gateway digipeating on 223.66 MHz. The node name is “SNVND”.

CLUB BREAKFASTS are held on the first Saturday of each month at Denny’s Restaurant, 18999 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma. The fun starts at 09:30 local.

Comments and submissions of material may be sent to:

WD6BOR@VOM.COM or
K6UUW@VOM.COM or
K2IYQ@VOM.COM

Valley of the Moon ARC, Inc.
175 First Street West
Sonoma, CA 95476

Valley of the Moon ARC
18958 Carillo Court
Sonoma, CA 95476

REMEMBER! THE JANUARY VOMARC MEETING IS THIS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, AT 7:30 P.M. AT MC DOUGAL HALL AT THE SONOMA DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER CU THERE!

VOMARC MEMBERSHIP

VOMARC 2003 Membership Dues: $10/year individual; $5/year family member.
ARRL Membership Dues: $39/year; Over 65, $34/year with proof of age; Family, No QST $8/year.

QST is available to blind and physically handicapped individuals on audio cassette from the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Call 1-800-424-8567.

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Your check should be made payable to: **VOMARC –** 18958 Carillo Court, Sonoma, CA 95476-5570